

NEWS RELEASE

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Sneaky Congressional “money-laundering” salary hike blasted by Libertarian Party

Taxpayers don't know what hit them yet, note Libertarians

WASHINGTON, DC — With the speed and craftiness of a cat burglar, the House gave itself a pay raise Wednesday without even taking a vote, the Libertarian Party noted today.

“Our Congressmen are each \$3,072 richer today — but most taxpayers still don't know what hit them,” said Steve Dasbach, national chairman of the Libertarian Party. “And just as a good thief wipes his fingerprints from the scene of the crime, these politicians wiped their fingerprints from this pay raise by not even officially voting on it.”

In a lightning-fast 75 minutes, the House passed a bill funding the Treasury and general government operations Wednesday by a vote of 231-192. Buried in the mammoth bill was a provision to raise the pay of Congressmen to \$136,672 a year. That's four times the median income of American families, Dasbach noted.

The sneaky part: In previous years, such spending bills contained cost-of-living increases for federal workers — with a specific *exemption* for Congress. If Congressmen wanted to raise their own salaries, they had to go on the record and vote to waive that exemption.

But this year, noted Dasbach, the exemption was quietly removed. So by approving the bill, Congressmen were able to give themselves a raise — while claiming they were “forced” to do so in order to fund general government operations.

“This stealth strategy is contemptible and cowardly,” Dasbach said. “If politicians think they're worth \$136,672 a year, they should say so — and see whether taxpayers agree.”

Even more outrageous: The sneaky maneuver was a bipartisan effort. Republican House Speaker Newt Gingrich and Democratic Minority Leader Richard Gephardt collaborated to devise a “money laundering” scheme to pocket the cash, Dasbach noted.

“They hatched a plot to insert the raise into the bill, but use a parliamentary procedure to block any vote on removing it. This enabled them to vote on the overall Treasury bill without voting for the raise itself,” he said. “This proves that Republicans and Democrats are perfectly capable of working together — as long as they *personally* benefit from the deal.”

The last time Congress demanded a raise, the Libertarian Party joined a coalition to oppose it. “We flooded Congress with phone calls and letters demanding that politicians stop the salary grab,” Dasbach said. “But now they're at it again, and it's time to launch Stop the Salary Grab II. Let's make sure Congressmen know *exactly* what we think about their new pay heist.”

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